

high as those during President Clinton's second term, then maybe Republicans would have a better argument. Of course, President Clinton's second term also saw significant job growth and expanding economy, and the only Federal budget surpluses since 1969—four in a row. But to complain about Federal deficits and then immediately call for cutting taxes on the highest income brackets—even lower than the current 31-year low under President Obama—shows significant hypocrisy or a lack of basic addition and subtraction skills.

So as today's Republicans try to spin a tax fairy tale, where the lowest Federal tax rate in 31 years under President Obama is somehow too high, while ignoring the higher rates through the eighties and nineties, perhaps it's time once again to ask: What would Ronald Reagan have done?

Republicans, even those who profess to idolize President Reagan, of course, won't ask because they don't want to hear the answer. Following the significant initial tax cuts in 1981, President Reagan subsequently signed into law a host of taxes to try to bring the budget back into balance. Five times he raised taxes in his 8 years.

Madam Speaker, as Congress debates the extension of the current tax burden, comprehensive tax reform, and overall budget deficits, I again feel compelled to ask my colleagues: What would Ronald Reagan do?

#### GOVERNMENT IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, recently I heard from Jacqueline, a small business owner in southeast Texas, and here's what she said:

Business owners who want to succeed put their heart and soul into their business. They are the ones who get there at the crack of dawn and leave after everyone else is long settled in for the night. I've been a small business owner, and I know a great many others like me, and nobody did anything for us, we did it for ourselves, and the only thing that the government did for us was tax us.

Apparently, this President disagrees with Jacqueline's statement. According to the administration: "If you've got a business, you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen." So the President is inferring, I suspect, that government should get the credit for the success of entrepreneurs. He is wrong, Madam Speaker.

People are the reason for American success—not government. Americans have the vision, creativity, and audacity to pursue a dream—not the government. Americans risk their life savings, not knowing what profit they will get back in return for their labor. Government doesn't risk anything. Americans spend long days, sleepless nights, and working on weekends away from their family in order to keep their

company afloat and pay their employees. Americans battle through discouragement and criticism in the hope for better days ahead. It is Americans who give up their home in order to pay for a store. And it's Americans who pay all those taxes and expensive government regulations that they're forced to pay.

Government isn't there when a decision is made to get a business started, to take a leap of faith, make a hire, sell first goods, or tally bills. People pursue their own American Dream without government holding their hand.

Those believers in Big Government say that Americans can only be successful if government controls their lives. Madam Speaker, government isn't the answer; government's the problem. America is not great because of government programs. It's great because of Americans, individuals with the spirit and desire to make their lives and this country better. Government doesn't assume the risk in business, individuals do.

Starting a business is not easy. Business is driven by American ingenuity, creativity and, yes, hard work. Those who have been successful didn't wait around for someone else to help them with a government handout. The reality is that government actually makes it harder to do business now, not easier.

When I ask Texas businesses what Washington can do for them, their answer is always the same: get out of the way. Businesses cannot afford to hire others and give them jobs because of the costly, unnecessary regulations imposed by government.

□ 1020

According to the World Bank's 2012 "Doing Business in a More Transparent World" report, the U.S. now ranks 13th in the world in places to start a business. We trail countries like Belarus, Macedonia, and Rwanda. Now, isn't that lovely?

America should not be a place where people wait for a government handout check. Instead, they should get a paycheck for working.

Individual achievement used to be celebrated in this country, but the administration seems to punish success. And what does the government do when individuals are successful? The government punishes them with taxes.

According to the collectivists, business wealth was created by government, and so it belongs to everybody. Sounds a lot like statism to me, Madam Speaker, the idea that citizens should be beholden to the government for everything and government is worshipped as the savior of us all. That is not the American philosophy, I know.

So the policy is, under the statists, tax people to death. Madam Speaker, you've heard that statement. If something moves, regulate it. If it keeps moving, tax it. And then if it stops moving, subsidize it. Government is doing all of the above to businesses in

this country. And government is also overtaxing those small businesses, keeping 23 million Americans from finding jobs.

Madam Speaker, small businesses create most of the jobs in this country. You see, when a small business is successful it can expand by hiring people. Government doesn't create jobs; people and businesses do.

So what next? Are the good days of American exceptionalism behind us? No. Americans are as exceptional as ever before, and it's the government that is our problem.

Where I come from, we teach our kids that, in this country, no matter who you are or where you came from, hard work and personal responsibility will pay off. In the America I know, people earn their paycheck and don't sit around waiting for a free government check.

Small business owner Jacqueline is correct. Individuals, American ingenuity, and free enterprise create success, not Washington. That is the American Dream, Madam Speaker. And when you see the President, tell him he's wrong.

And that's just the way it is.

#### WE NEED PNTR NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEKS. Russia, with some of the world's most sophisticated consumers and a rapidly growing market, will join the World Trade Organization by summer's end. After 18 years of negotiating with the United States and the World Trade Organization, after improving their trade laws and reducing tariffs, yes, very shortly Russia will be a member of the World Trade Organization.

For the United States, this could mean improved market access for our exports of goods and services. It could mean protections if Russia violates international rules. It could mean a trade boost, an additional 50,000 jobs or more right here in the United States of America, and all of this, if the United States and this Congress lifts the Cold War relic, the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and authorizes permanent normal trade relations. We've waived Jackson-Vanik for over 20 years. We now need PNTR, and we need to do it now.

Our competitors will have access to that market. We will then fall behind them.

We can compete with anybody in the world. This is the greatest country in the world. Let's not lock ourselves out of the market in Russia. Let's not put ourselves behind our competitors. Here's an opportunity for us to come together.

You heard earlier this morning my friend and colleague, DAVID DREIER, bringing folks together, talking about how we can do this together with the President of the United States, who has an export initiative, to create more jobs.